

Nosebleed (Epistaxis)

Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

This leaflet tells you about Epistaxis also know as nosebleeds. It tells you what to do during a nosebleed and how to treat them.

What causes nosebleeds?

The inside of your nose is full of tiny blood vessels which can bleed if there is a minor injury, such as when you are picking or blowing your nose.

Nosebleeds can also happen if the mucous membrane (moist lining) inside your nose dries out and becomes crusty. This can be caused by an infection, cold weather or the drying effect of central heating. If the mucous membrane becomes inflamed or cracked, it is more likely to bleed if it is disturbed.

Are nosebleeds serious?

Nosebleeds are not usually serious. Frequent or heavy nosebleeds may be a sign of a more serious health problem, such as high blood pressure. A nosebleed can be more serious for older people whose blood takes longer to clot because they are at risk of losing more blood.

If you keep having nosebleeds you should see your GP. If a serious problem is suspected, you may be referred to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist for further tests.

Large amounts of bleeding over a long period of time can lead to anaemia. Frequent nosebleeds (more than once a week) or heavy nosebleeds can make anaemia worse if you are losing a lot of blood.

Is there anything I should do after a nosebleed?

You should:

- keep your head upright when bending down.
- try to stay away from people who have a cold or flu.
- avoid alcohol, hot baths, smoking and hot drinks because they expand the blood vessels in the lining of your nose, increasing the chances of bleeding again.
- try not to strain when going to the toilet.
- avoid sport or active exercise for a few days.
- **not** blow your nose soon after, as this will disturb the healing process.
- **not** use nasal sprays unless it has been given to you by a doctor.

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- not pick the clot or scab.

What should I do if my nose starts to bleed again?

If you are not feeling faint, you should sit up and lean forward. This will make the blood less likely to go down into your stomach which will make you vomit.

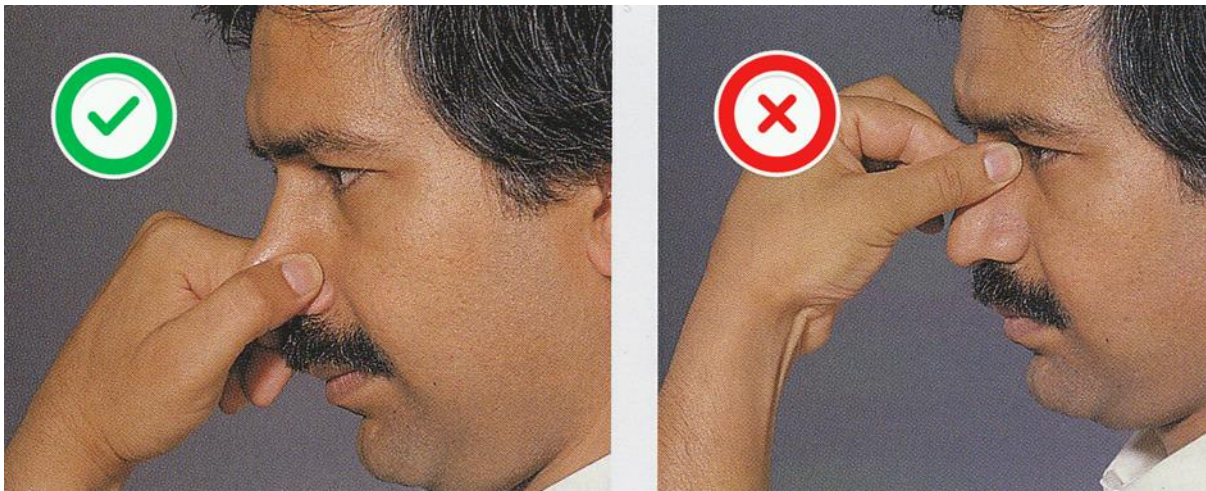
You should pinch the soft part at the end of your nose, as shown in the picture below for 20 - 30 minutes. You should not release the pressure.

You should not try to plug your nose with cotton wool or tissue.

If:

- the bleeding does not stop
- you are feeling dizzy or fainting
- you are vomiting swallowed blood

you should contact your GP for further advice.



How can I prevent a nosebleed?

You can help to prevent nosebleeds by:

- not picking your nose and blowing your nose hard if it is blocked due to a cold or hay fever.
- always following the instructions that come with nasal decongestants.

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- talking to your GP if you are prescribed blood-thinning medicines (anticoagulants) and you have a history of nosebleeds.

Contact numbers

If you have any worries or concerns you should contact your GP during normal surgery hours. Outside surgery hours, you should contact your GP's surgery for the Out of Hours Service number.

Further information is available from:

NHS Choices

telephone: 111 (when it is less urgent than 999)

Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones or via the website at www.nhs.uk

Information used in the development of this leaflet

Leaflet "About Epistaxis or nosebleeds". © 2010 ENT UK - The Royal College of Surgeons of England

www.patient.info/health/dealing-with-a-nosebleed accessed 29.09.2015

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This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we're doing well or if there's anything which we can improve, that's why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

telephone: 01642 624719

Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

freephone: 0800 092 0084

Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883

Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

telephone: 01642 617617

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

telephone: 01642 833551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk

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